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ABSTRACT

This learning module, which is intended for use in in-service training for vocational rehabilitation counselors, deals with methods of increasing client behaviors that do not occur often or fast enough. The following topics are discussed: basic approaches to increasing the extent and frequency of desired behaviors; ways of changing environment; and reinforcement, including determining reinforcers, using different categories of reinforcers (activities, tangibles, and social reinforcers), selecting and delivering reinforcers, and using negative reinforcement. The text reviews basic strategies and provides an opportunity for supervised application of the techniques described. Two self-tests are also included. (MN)

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REHABILITATION ASSOCIATE
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYED STAFF

Increasing Existing Behavior (RA-6)

CE041648

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INCREASING EXISTING BEHAVIOR

by

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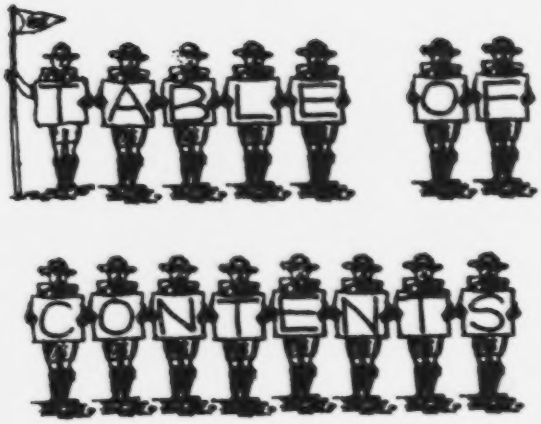
REHABILITATION ASSOCIATE TRAINING
FOR EMPLOYED STAFF

MODULE: RA-6 Increasing Existing Behaviors

DESCRIPTORS: *changing environments, reinforcement, client conditions, instructor conditions, environmental conditions, social reinforcement, activities, tangibles, schedules*

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this module is to acquaint the staff person with methods of increasing behaviors in clients which do not occur often enough or fast enough. Basic strategies will be reviewed in the text. Supervised application of the techniques will be provided by the instructor.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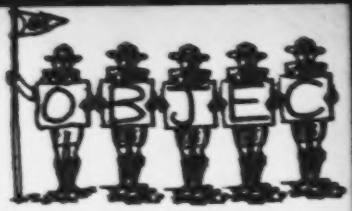


BEHAVIOR

1 Write a program for increasing a behavior in a client.

2 Determine specific environmental changes needed to increase given target behaviors.

3 Identify procedures being used to increase specific target behaviors.

EVALUATION

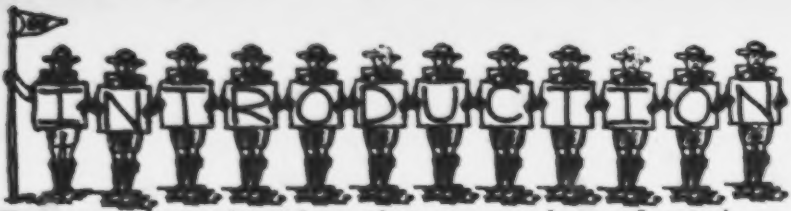
1 Written test. Will be given a description of a low frequency behavior and enough information to determine problems with conditions surrounding the behavior. Must resolve these problems and include other appropriate considerations for increasing the behavior.

2 Written test. Will be given a description of target behaviors and respective environmental conditions which need changed in some respect.

3 Written test. Will be given descriptions of behaviors/procedures; must identify procedures illustrated in the situations.

The following material contains questions throughout. You will be much more likely to remember the information if you will write the answers in your student workbook as you read. If you can't remember the answer, go back and re-read the preceding section. You can check your answers by reviewing the material.

Good Luck !



There are *four* situations that you may be confronted with as a staff person:

1. A client may do a behavior too often (the behavior needs to be *reduced or eliminated*).

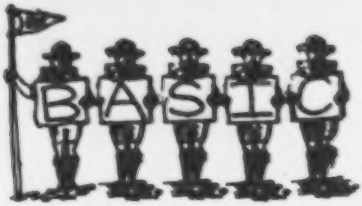
2. A client may not do a behavior often enough (the behavior needs to be *increased*).

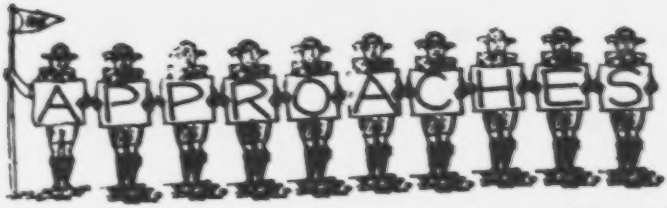
3. A client may not do a behavior at all (the behavior needs to be *taught*).

4. A client may do a behavior appropriately (the behavior needs to be *maintained*).

If you have a client who sometimes brushes his hair, or sometimes sweeps the floor, or who has good and bad days on the job; this module is for you!

This module deals with the second of these situations . . . a client sometimes does a behavior (so you know s/he has the skill), but the behavior does not occur often enough.





There are basically two approaches you can take to increase a behavior *(you'll want to do both)*:

A One approach occurs before the behavior *(an antecedent)*; you *change the environment* to make the behavior more likely to occur.

B One approach occurs after the behavior *(a consequence)*: you *reinforce* the behavior to make it more likely to occur in the future.

Behavior

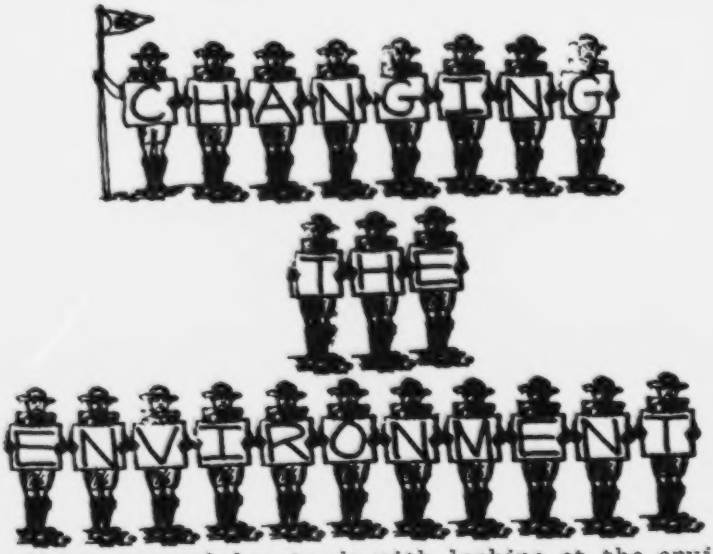
GIVEN TIME

before after

Arrange the environment to optimize the occurrence of the behavior.

Reinforce the behavior to increase its likelihood.

The behavior will increase.



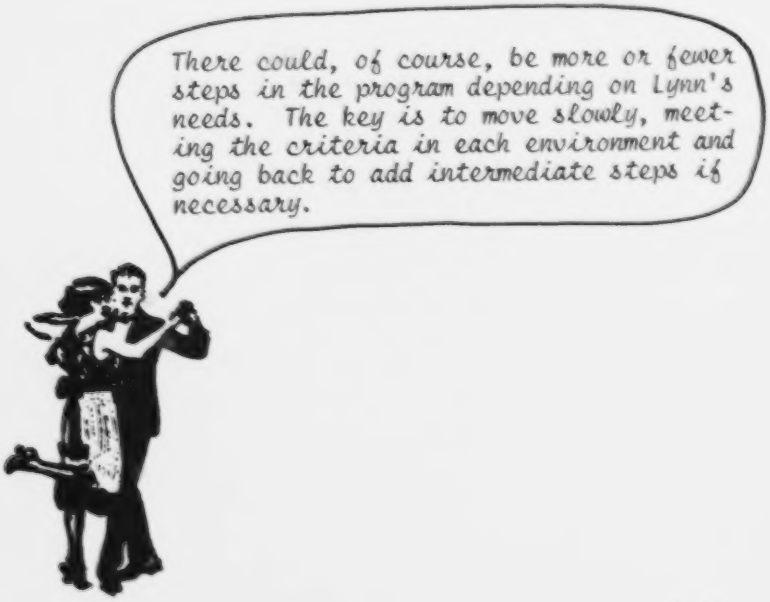
The first approach has to do with looking at the environment in which the behavior is to occur. Rather than searching for complex solutions, behaviors frequently do not occur often enough simply because the environment interferes with them. *For example*, there can be many distractions in any environment that make it difficult to perform a given behavior.

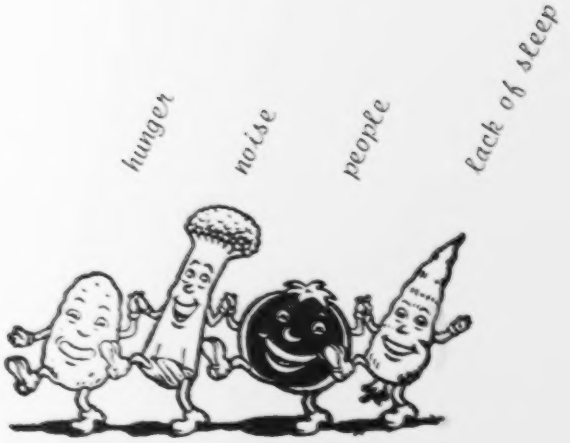
Environmental conditions can actually be broken down into three areas:

1. Client conditions
2. Instructor conditions
3. Specific environmental conditions.

Some clients are easily distracted and do not work well around other people or noise. A very simple solution to this problem might be to MOVE THE CLIENT TO A QUIETER, LESS CROWDED PLACE. This could be the first step in a behavior change program. It might work like this:

1. Move Lynn to an individual room to complete her circuit board.
2. Move Lynn to a quiet corner of the regular work room until criteria are met.
3. Move Lynn to within ten feet of the regular station and meet criteria.
4. Return Lynn to her regular place.


There could, of course, be more or fewer steps in the program depending on Lynn's needs. The key is to move slowly, meeting the criteria in each environment and going back to add intermediate steps if necessary.



HUNGER is another common competing stimulus in addition to NOISE and PEOPLE that may interfere with work. It is difficult to work when your stomach is growling. It is also difficult to work when your eyes keep falling shut. So, LACK OF SLEEP may interfere with performance. If you suspect one of these problems, perhaps mealtimes can be altered or snacks arranged. An earlier bed time, or getting up later, may be the answer.

List 4 competing stimuli that may interfere with work

1
2
3
4

Sometimes a behavior is difficult because the setting is not organized as well as it could be. Sweeping the kitchen is more difficult and less likely to happen if the broom is in the garage and the dust pan on the porch, than if all the equipment is in one place in the kitchen. A client who has to use tools from several different locations will probably have trouble. The client who packs boxes with items from several different locations will probably do it slowly. Therefore, another aspect of the environment to look at is the organization of the materials.

It's time to

get organized!

ORGANIZING THE ENVIRONMENT is a simple change that can be made to increase behavior when ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI doesn't seem appropriate.

What are 2 ways to make behavior more likely to happen ?

Sometimes clients really don't know what you want them to do. *Perhaps* the instructions are unclear. *Perhaps* you have fallen into the trap of expecting the client to know what to do, when in fact he does not know. It may be that all you have to do is tell the client what to do. People with any sort of language skills need to be INFORMED OF THE CONTINGENCIES IN CLEAR, CONCISE, AND CONSISTENT LANGUAGE. That is, they need to know what you want them to do and what they will get for doing it.

IF One staff says, "*Joe, get to work,*"

AND IF another says, "*Joe, get busy,*"

AND IF a third says, "*Joe, time to start,*"

the client may not understand what is expected. A standard cue must be chosen and used *consistently* (at least in the beginning) for each client.

This is another simple environmental change, in addition to ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI and ORGANIZING THE MATERIALS that can make a difference in the rate of behavior.

These antecedent solutions are often the easiest. . . and yet frequently are not considered. Quite often, these changes alone will have the desired effect on the behavior.

Do you understand changing the environment?

Does this occur before or after the desired behavior ?

What 3 general categories of conditions should be looked at ?

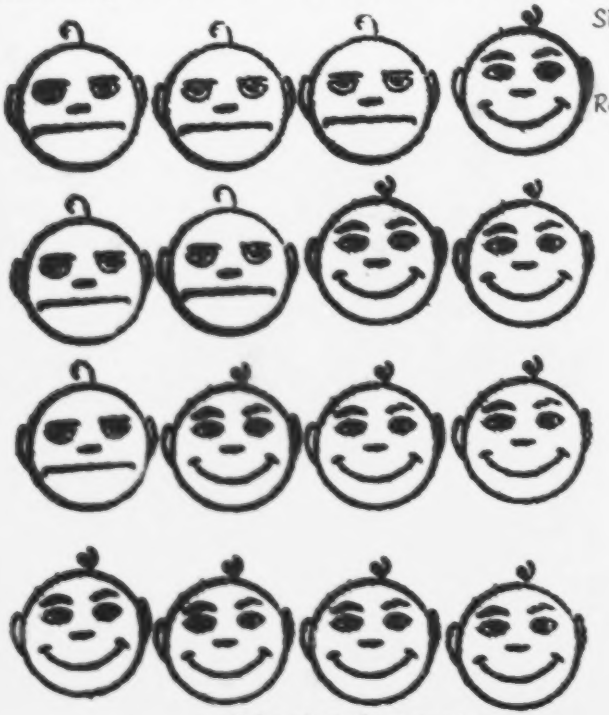
The four aspects of the environment we have discussed, ORGANIZING THE MATERIALS, ELIMINATING COMPETING STIMULI, INFORMING THE CLIENT OF THE CONTINGENCIES IN CLEAR AND CONSISTENT LANGUAGE, and SCHEDULING may seem very simplistic. They are. But what is wrong with solving a problem with an easy answer? Since these solutions are so easy and cheap to implement, they must be considered before the heavy artillery: REINFORCEMENT is brought into the picture.

If a client does a behavior, but not often enough, and environmental changes either don't work or weren't possible, *what can you do?* Use a reinforcer, that's what!

What is a reinforcer?

A reinforcer is a STIMULUS (a thing or activity) that FOLLOWS a response and INCREASES THE OCCURRENCE OF THAT RESPONSE IN THE FUTURE.

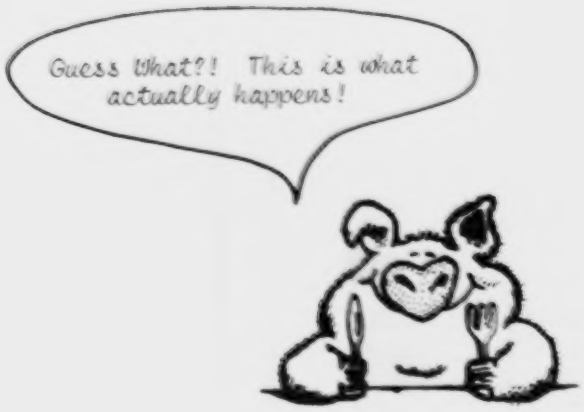
Simply stated, this means people are more likely to do something if that something is followed by a good thing.

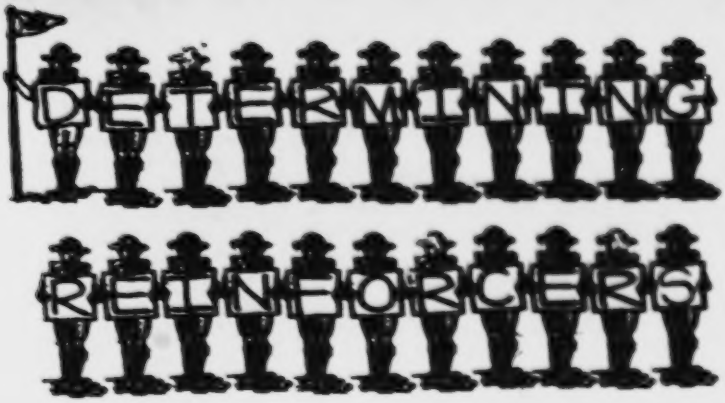


Behavior increases.

Define reinforcer

This definition means that if we can find something that is reinforcing to a given client, and follow the client's behavior by giving him/her that *thing*, the frequency of the behavior will increase.





The trick (plus a few other things to be explained later) is basically to find out for each client what is reinforcing to *them* (since different things are reinforcing to different people).

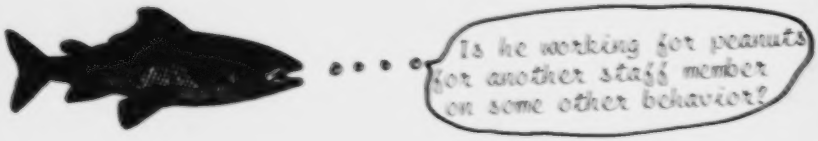
Strategies for doing this include:

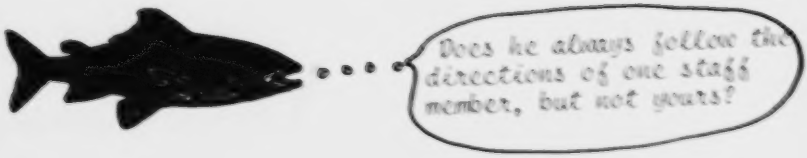
1. Ask the client (*that's simple*--but only if what they choose <u>does</u> function as a reinforcer.)

2. Ask someone who knows the client (*that's also simple!*)

3. See what the client chooses when given options.

4. Most *importantly*, try some things (including 1, 2, & 3 above) and see what happens: A stimulus is only reinforcing if the behavior increases!





How do you know if a stimulus is a reinforcer ?

No matter how much you like chocolate or praise, if it doesn't increase your client's behavior, it is not a reinforcer for her!

No matter how much your client says he wants to watch TV, if access to the TV doesn't increase his behavior, it is not a reinforcer for him in that particular instance!

A stimulus that is a reinforcer for one program may not function as a reinforcer in some other setting. A stimulus that you want to serve as a reinforcer always has to be tried in every new situation.

If you try a potential reinforcer and it does not increase the behavior, that does not mean reinforcement doesn't work. It simply means you haven't tried the right stimulus!

There are many types of stimuli that may function as reinforcers. Among these are three basic categories:

1 *activities*

2 *tangible objects*

3 *social*

Activities that may function as reinforcers can be anything the client wishes to do. Some common activities are

Sometimes things such as *being alone* or *being with a particular person* can function as a reinforcer. Do not overlook the possibility that *the chance to work* can be a reinforcer (especially if the client gets paid). Also, *helping staff* could be a reinforcing activity for some people.

ACTIVITIES

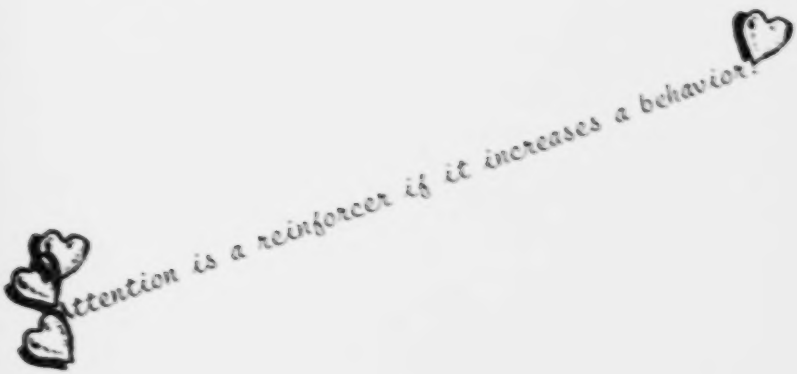
ACTIVITIES are usually easy to use and most require little effort on the part of the staff to implement. They are usually activities already available to the client. They just need to be rearranged so he does what you want before he gets to do what he wants. They are very normal. We all operate on this kind of system. You go to work before you play on weekends. You do your dishes before you go to the movie.

TANGIBLE ITEMS that may be reinforcers include

or perhaps the *material to do a certain job*. If they are items the client already is getting, it is a simple matter to rearrange the situation so she gets what she wants after she does what you want.

TANGIBLE ITEMS

The last category we are going to talk about is SOCIAL REINFORCEMENT. This is the *cheapest, easiest to deliver, most normal,* and *least intrusive* reinforcer available; and for many clients, the most powerful.



This attention can be verbal, like praise statements, or even critical statements. It can be physical like a touch on the shoulder or a pat on the back; or, in rare cases, physical abuse. It can also be more subtle like

This attention can come from you, the staff member, or from the client's peers.

When using praise statements as reinforcers, you can facilitate learning by being specific. *"You got the bolt in the right hole,"* gives the client much more information about what you want than, *"Good job!"* There are lots of ways to say "Good job!" (see p. 36-7). By making different statements, you may be able to relieve some of the boredom in doing repetitive tasks.

Praise may increase behavior. . .

but so may criticism!

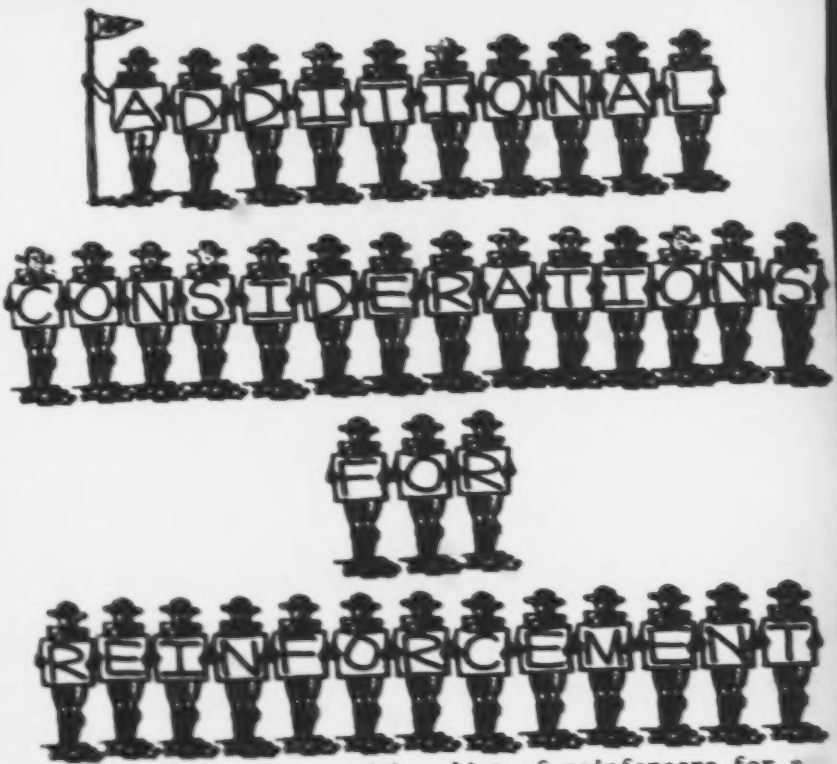
The biggest problem with social reinforcement is often any type of attention works. Thus, so-called negative attention may be just as effective at increasing a behavior as positive attention. Criticizing a client for getting out of her seat may very well increase getting out of the seat behavior. Explaining why it is wrong to argue or fight may increase fighting. Long explanations of why any particular behavior is wrong and shouldn't be done, are very likely to increase the undesired behavior. Remember, *intent doesn't count!* Just because you want to decrease getting out of seat does not mean it will happen. If you attend to the behavior and it increases, then you have reinforced the behavior in spite of what you set out to do.

99 ways

62. I'm proud of the way you worked today.
37. Nice going.
79. Well look at you go!
13. That's great!
28. That's really nice.
86. You did that very well
83. I like that.
76. You remembered!
5. That's RIGHT!!!
74. That's IT!
2. You're doing a good job!
18. I think you've got it now.
56. You're learning fast.
61. I'm happy to see you working like that.
82. OUTSTANDING!
85. Now that's what I call a fine job!
88. Congratulations, you got (number of behaviors) right!
38. You make it look easy.
32. Good for you!
1. That's the way!
36. SUPER!
4. Now you've figured it out.
50. That's the way to do it!
72. FINE!
66. That's quite an improvement.
95. You really make my job fun.
17. TERRIFIC!
98. One more time and you'll have it.
31. Much better!
64. You are really learning a lot.
26. Good going!
23. That's a good (boy/girl).
59. You've just about got it.
75. You figured that out fast.
10. Now you have it!
90. SENSATIONAL!
16. FANTASTIC!
77. You're really improving.
20. GOOD WORK!
60. That's good.
68. MARVELOUS!
44. You're getting better everyday.
53. Nothing can stop you now!
73. You'v got your brain in gear today.
89. Right on!
67. That kind of work makes me very happy.
33. That's very much better!
97. You've just about mastered that!
14. You did it that time!

to say "very good"

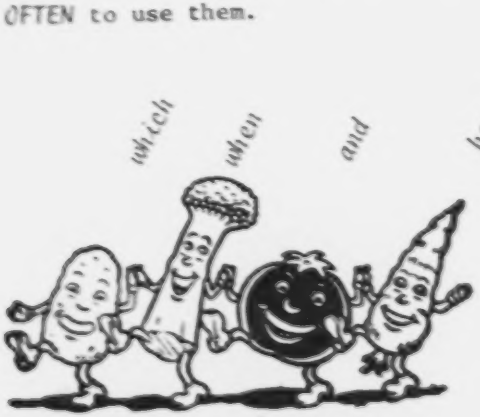
41. Way to go!
8. You're really going to town!
47. Keep working on it, you're getting better.
93. You haven't missed a thing.
43. SUPERB!
21. That's better.
81. TREMENDOUS!
70. PERFECT!
80. You've got that down pat.
49. You're really working hard today.
25. That's the best you've ever done!
39. I've never seen anyone do it better.
55. You are very good at that.
45. WONDERFUL!
35. Exactly right!
57. That's what I like to see!
96. I'm very proud of you.
6. Congratulations!
92. Good remembering!
24. Good job, (name of student)!
27. Keep it up!
29. WOW!!
91. That's the best ever.
42. O.K!
1. You're on the right track now!
46. I knew you could do it.
54. You've got it made.
34. Good thinking!
19. You outdid yourself today.
69. Muy Bien!
40. You're doing that much better today.
15. GREAT!
58. You certainly did well today.
71. Far OUT!
22. EXCELLENT!
11. Nice going.
84. Couldn't have done it better myself.
63. That's the right way to do it.
94. It's a pleasure to teach when you work like that.
12. That's coming along nicely.
28. You're doing beautifully.
18. Good for you!
3. You did a lot of work today
65. That's better than ever!
52. THAT'S it!
88. That was first class work.
9. You're doing fine!
30. Keep up the good work.
99. You must have been practicing!
31. Keep on trying!

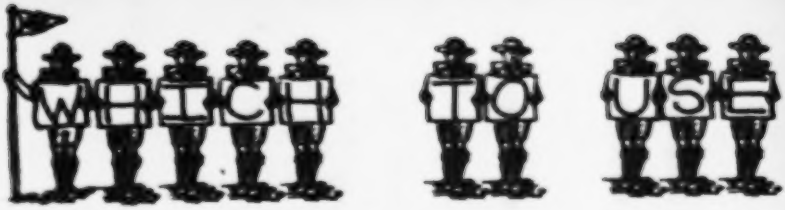


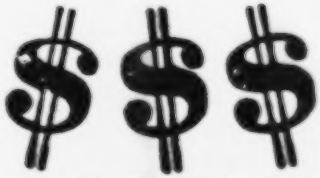
Once you have come up with a list of reinforcers for a client, you then must consider:

WHICH to use: consideration for selection of reinforcers.

WHEN & HOW OFTEN to use them.







Cost is important to all administrators so it has to be a factor. Crafts may be effective, but can get expensive. So can movies, bowling or trips to town. Cost can also mean cost in terms of staff time. Any special events or outings usually have to be chaperoned, and may be costly.

EASE

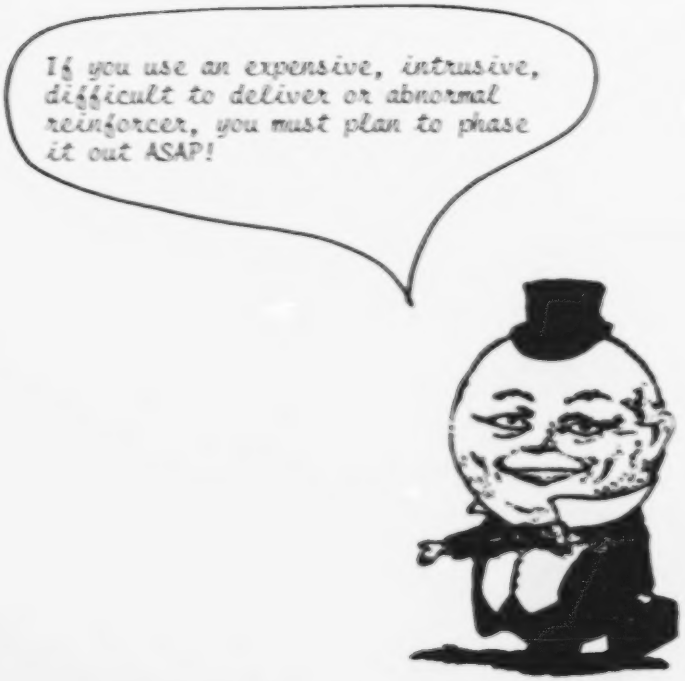
A trip home may be a powerful reinforcer, but perhaps you can't deliver it because the family doesn't want the client home now. Sex undoubtedly would be a powerful reinforcer, but the law usually makes this impossible. Some things may be possible, but just more difficult to deliver.

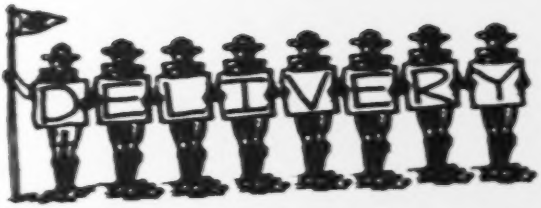
For example, food is more difficult to deliver than praise.

Intrusiveness refers to how much the reinforcer interrupts the ongoing behavior. Food, for example, has to be eaten before the behavior can continue; therefore, it is intrusive. A long verbal praise statement may interrupt not only the target client, but others nearby.

Finally, the concept of *normalization* has to be considered. The word "normal" means "common." What do people in the real world usually receive for the response that is being increased? It is not normal for adults to receive bits of food for doing something right. A lot of praise is also not normal. A pay check is normal.

There is only one reason to choose a reinforcer that is intrusive, expensive, difficult to deliver, or not normal. This reason is that it is the only stimulus that's been found to work. For example, a *token economy* meets none of the four considerations. In terms of staff time and administration money, it is costly. It is very intrusive and not normal. However, it may be the only way to solve a collection of problems with a group of clients. Therefore, it may be the legitimate method of choice. This is acceptable as long as it is viewed as an intermediate step, and not as the final solution. The token needs to be *phased out* to another reinforcement system as soon as possible.





The second consideration is *how and when* to reinforce. There are several things to keep in mind when delivering the reinforcers you have selected: -

1 DELIVER IT FAST: If it is food, it may need to be put directly into the mouth, the faster the better. The more immediately the reinforcer is delivered, the more direct the association between the correct behavior and the consequence. The general rule is, *"the lower functioning the person, the more immediate the reinforcer has to be."* The space can be bridged by language for the higher functioning people.

2 THIN OUT REINFORCEMENT GRADUALLY: Start by giving the reinforcer after every correct response. Then for every 2 or 3 correct, then for every 6 or 8, as the client gets more and more responses correct. *It is not normal to receive a reinforcer for every correct response.* Therefore, thinning is a necessary step to normalcy. This must be done gradually, however, because if too much is expected for too little too soon, the behavior may decrease or stop. As the reinforcers you deliver are faded out, the reinforcers in the natural environment will start to maintain the behavior.

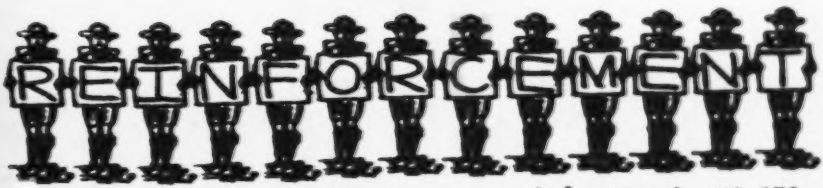
3 **PAIR IT WITH PRAISE:** Since social reinforcement is the easiest to deliver, most normal, least intrusive reinforcement, the final goal should be for the client to respond for socials (except for legitimate paychecks, of course). The best way to facilitate this is to *always give a social along with whatever other stimulus you are using.* As you start to thin out the other reinforcer, you still have the social to maintain the behavior.

4 WATCH FOR SATIATION: Sometimes a stimulus that was working fine as a reinforcer seems to be losing its effectiveness because the client has become tired of it. We all could get tired of ice cream or latch hook or TV after long enough exposure to it. *If a program has been working well and progress suddenly drops off, or the client begins to have good and bad days, you probably need to try some new stimulus as a reinforcer or to vary what you use.*

5 BE CONSISTENT: This is especially important in the beginning phases of a program and is extremely difficult with a large and/or rotating staff. *The same behavior has to be reinforced in all settings for significant behavior change to occur.* This means all staff have to be aware of written programs and all procedures have to be written.

BE CONSISTENT!

What are 5 things to remember when delivering reinforcers ?



In point #2 above on thinning out reinforcement, we are actually talking about *schedules of reinforcement* (setting up a schedule, or plan, on when you will give the reinforcement).

There are two schedules or patterns of reinforcement that are useful to increase rates of behavior. They are CONTINUOUS (CRF) and DIFFERENTIAL REINFORCEMENT OF HIGH RATES OF BEHAVIOR (DRH).

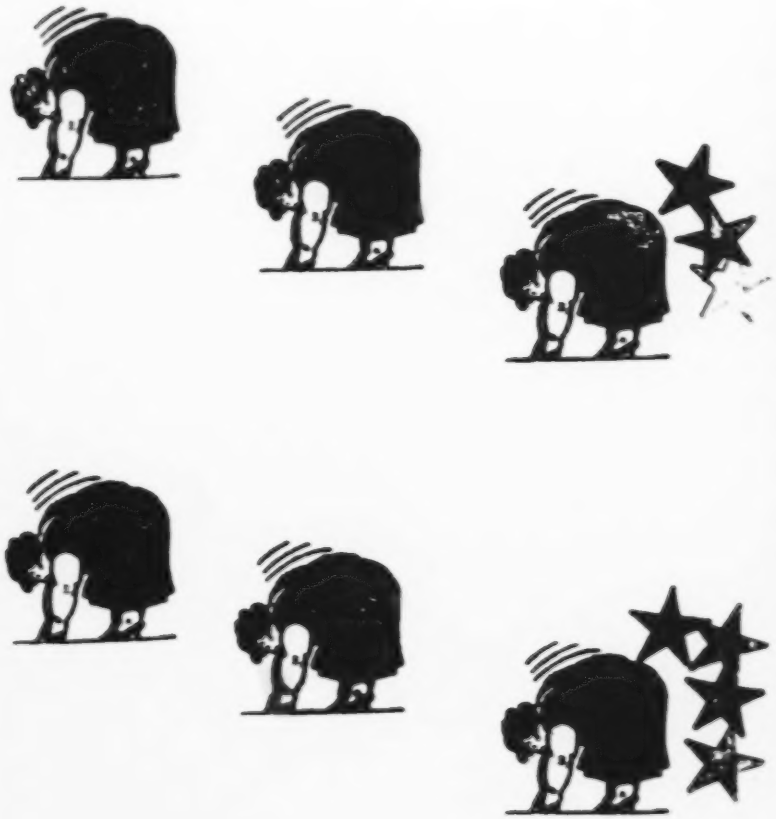
What are 2 schedules for programming reinforcement to increase existing behaviors ?

Continuous reinforcement is easy. It means *every time a correct response occurs, it is reinforced*. This type of scheduling requires the constant attention of a teacher.

An example of continuous reinforcement!

Define CRF

DRH may be somewhat easier to use because it does not require the total attention of a teacher. It means *reinforcement is given at the end of a specified time period of an adequate number of responses have been made.* For example, if Joe assembles 10 widgets in an hour, he may earn a reinforcer.



An example of DRH!

Define DRH

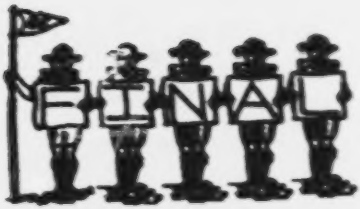
DRH is a good choice if there is a permanent product that can be counted and if the client does the behavior, but not fast enough.

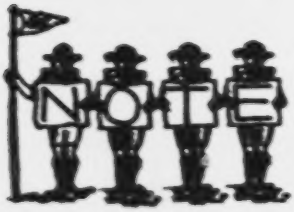
Use DRH when there is a permanent product that can be counted. . .

or if the client does the behavior, but not fast enough!

When is DRH appropriate ?

Once the behavior has been increased, there are other kinds of schedules to help *maintain* it. This topic is covered in a separate module.





No material on reinforcement is complete without a statement about negative reinforcement: Negative reinforcement is NOT punishment. *NO, it is not punishment!*

Is negative reinforcement punishment ?

Negative reinforcement *increases* behavior just as positive reinforcement (the kind we have been talking about so far) does.

Does negative reinforcement increase or decrease behavior ?

Here is a breakdown of the words that may help differentiate between these two terms:

Positive means PLUS. *In positive reinforcement something is added or given to the client* (i.e., praise or food). Reinforcement means *the behavior increases.* In order to increase a behavior, a REINFORCING STIMULUS or something good has to be given.

Define positive reinforcer

What kind of a stimulus has to be presented to increase a behavior ?

In negative reinforcement, the word reinforcement still means the behavior will increase, but negative means *something is taken away* to cause the increase. Therefore, the removal of an AVERSIVE STIMULUS or something bad can function as a reinforcer.

THE BEHAVIOR INCREASES

Define negative reinforcer

65

What kind of a stimulus has to be removed to function as a reinforcer ?

This is not a kind of reinforcement that usually is programmed. It is important, however, when trying to determine what is maintaining a present inappropriate behavior.

For example,

1 *The avoidance of work may function as a reinforcer for tired or sick behavior!*

2 *Saying, "I'm busy," may be reinforcement by the avoidance of some aversive task, like reading this material!*

3 *Escaping from a meeting with your supervisor may function as a reinforcer for agreeing with her!*

4 *Escaping from the presence of an obnoxious client may maintain your behavior of isolating him when it is not specifically necessary according to the written programs!*

These are all examples of behavior being maintained by negative reinforcement. Be on the look-out for this phenomenon in your facility.

Now you are ready to start . . .

Reinforcement feels good...

to you and your client...

So have fun!

UNCLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

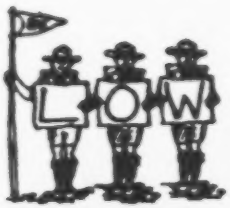
ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRACTIONS

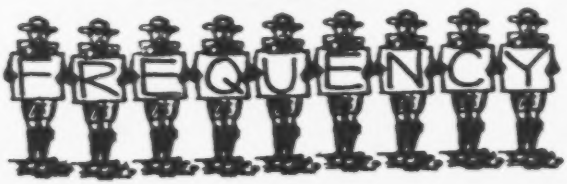
behavior

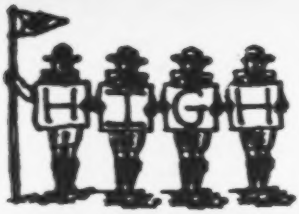
LACK OF REINFORCEMENT

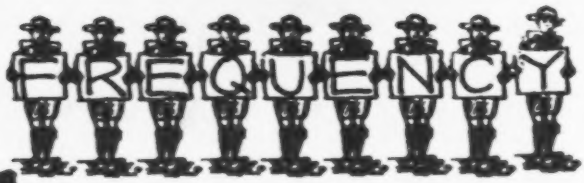
SICK, TIRED, SLEEPY CLIENT

becomes









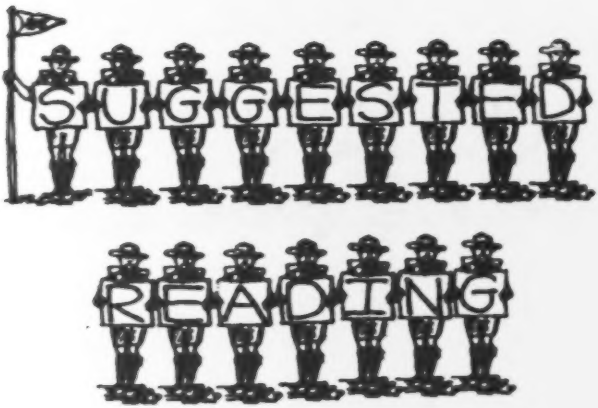
MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRACTIONS

HEALTHY CLIENT

BEHAVIOR

CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

APPROPRIATE REINFORCEMENT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Tape-Slide Show:

Behavior Modification Skills, Unit 2--Increasing Behavior Research Training. Slides Research Media Inc., 4 Midland Ave., Hicksville, New York 11801

Self-Test #1

1. List three examples of environmental conditions which might make it difficult for clients to do the desired behavior.

2. List solutions to those examples you provided in #1 above.

Self-Test #2

1. List three ways to determine what is reinforcing to a client.

2. How can you tell if a stimulus really is a reinforcer for a client?

3. Give an example of each of three different kinds of reinforcers.

4. What general considerations should be made in choosing reinforcers?

5. What are the rules for delivering reinforcers?

6. What does negative reinforcement do to the behavior that is reinforced?

Self-Test #2 (Con't.)

7. How can the environment be changed to make the target (underlined) behavior more likely to happen?

   a) Alan is very slow at packing the materials in the first aid kits. He has to pack items from three different tables and off the floor.

   b) Todd is constantly looking out the window at work. He gets up every time a car goes by or he hears a noise. He's supposed to be packing boxes.

   c) Norman sometimes wears socks with his shoes but often doesn't. You have never told him you consider this appropriate for work but you do praise him when he wears socks.

   d) Terry is just starting to disassemble meters. You have scheduled this session for 3:30 p.m. and he is having a lot of trouble.

Self-Test #2 (Con't.)

8. Choose the best answer after each situation.

A. DRH
B. CRF
C. Not a reinforcement procedure
D. Not enough information to identify procedure

a) Doug is going to work at a restaurant and you want him to wash dishes faster. You have started giving him 50¢ if he has 20 glasses washed correctly in 30 minutes.

b) Aaron earns five minutes in the rec room for every handle he puts on a broom. The data are:

M--22 T-29 W--34 Th--39 F--50

c) Every day Gary comes to work on time he gets to take the supervisor the lunch count. He was on time Monday but was late every other day last week.

d) June calls people names a lot. You have been explaining to her why she shouldn't do this. You think she is doing it less and so does her favorite victim.

e) Justin is working on time telling. You think he knows how, so every time he gets one wrong you explain what he did wrong in great detail. You praise right answers. Data: M--8 right 2 wrong T--7 right 3 wrong W--5 right 5 wrong Th--4 right 6 wrong F--1 right 9 wrong